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Gov. Riley, Public Safety Announce ‘Take Back Our Highways’ Campaign *State Troopers Set Sights on DUI, Seat Belt Violations, Aggressive Driving*

MONTGOMERY — Gov. Bob Riley announced that more than 125 additional state troopers will hit the roads Aug. 18-24, ramping up DUI, seat belt and aggressive driving enforcement during a statewide “Take Back Our Highways” traffic safety campaign.

Public Safety Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy joined the governor at a Montgomery news conference to unveil plans for the traffic safety and enforcement effort, which DPS successfully pioneered last year to combat Alabama’s rising fatality rate. Trooper-worked fatalities dropped by 62 in 2007, and troopers have worked 93 fewer fatalities this year, compared with the same period last year.

“‘Take Back Our Highways’ is clearly working to save lives. It has gotten real results. There are people alive today because of this intensive highway safety effort. We want the people of Alabama to understand that when they travel, their safety is our number one concern,” said Riley.

The governor said the Mississippi and Tennessee highway patrols and Alabama sheriff and police departments also will join state troopers in the initiative to save lives and increase traffic safety.

Since the initial “Take Back Our Highways” campaign in August 2007, rural traffic crashes, deaths and injuries have declined significantly, said Murphy. “We have saved more than 150 lives in the last 18 months because of the work of our state troopers. With innovative programs like ‘Take Back Our Highways,’ we are making a difference for Alabama.”

Murphy said Public Safety is not content with the recent gains in highway safety and that troopers remain focused on changing driving behavior to increase safety. “Too many Alabamians die or are seriously injured on our roadways in preventable crashes,” he said. “Too many motorists are the victims of drunken drivers, and fully two-thirds of the fatality victims troopers have responded to this year were not using seat belts.”

Murphy said every available trooper, including approximately 125 from divisions other than Highway Patrol, will be patrolling during the week-long blitz, enforcing traffic laws and assisting motorists statewide. “We will have troopers from every rank and every division, including Driver License and ABI, in uniform and on the road Aug. 18-25,” he said.

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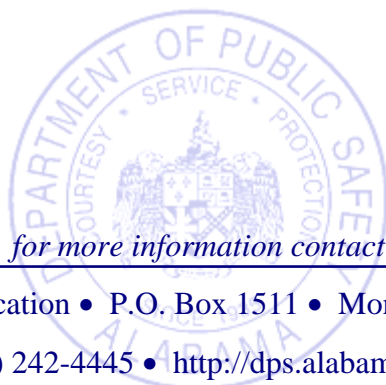
Troopers will utilize proven enforcement initiatives, including line patrols, checkpoints and saturation patrols, concentrating their efforts on high-traffic, high-crash corridors. In addition to DUI, seat belt and child restraint enforcement, troopers will target other driving behaviors that place motorists at greatest risk. These are speeding, failure to yield the right of way, following too closely, and driver inattention.

DPS also will roll out the first of nine new “BAT Mobiles” during the initiative, placing into service two of the specially equipped DUI enforcement assets that will be assigned to trooper DUI task forces statewide. The “BAT Mobiles” are equipped with custom breath alcohol testing gear, provided by the Department of Forensic Sciences, and other equipment needed to process impaired drivers and gather evidence for court. They are funded by \$1.4 million in grants awarded by the governor and administered through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs.

“Thanks to Gov. Riley, ADECA and Forensic Sciences, troopers will be able to test suspected impaired drivers on the spot, increasing effectiveness and saving both time and money,” said Murphy.

Throughout the traffic safety campaign, troopers will use the “BAT Mobiles” at sobriety checkpoints to test the blood alcohol content of impaired drivers.

Aug. 13, 2008



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